3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of this book, especially Chapters IV and V will show how the organization of Ngoni society and the cultural way of living in it, necessarily surrounded the life of children and the training given to them with a much wider horizon. We shall talk about the family, the household, the village as the setting of Ngoni child life, but these terms have to be interpreted according to the Ngoni social organization, sketched very briefly in Chapter I and set out at length in my earlier book *The Ngoni of Nyasaland*. Looked at from another angle, we can see that a young child's horizon in Ngoni villages was limited at first to what he saw around him and the people who had daily or frequent contact with him and who understood and supplied his daily needs. But that circle of people forming a young child's contacts was from the beginning much wider than the individual family which a child was born into. When he began to run about and to pass beyond the restricted confines of the household, it was as we shall see, the duty and responsibility of all Ngoni adults to notice his behaviour and correct him when necessary.

The relationships inside the large Ngoni families, between one family and another in a Ngoni village, with related families in other villages, with all members of the same clan living in an area—these were threads in the web of kinship and clanship which united the Ngoni people. These threads were also inseparable from the political links between the people and their territorial chief, and between the whole people and the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The difference, however, between the Ngoni kingdom under the Paramount which included all his subjects of Ngoni and non-Ngoni ethnic groups, and the Ngoni aristocracy in the villages was a profound difference. It was the latter who understood, appreciated and sought to hand on to their children Ngoni ways of living based on Ngoni values. Hence in most villages there were sharp distinctions between standards of behaviour within Ngoni families and in non-Ngoni families.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

III

'A New Stranger has come'

In these words the father's mother announced from the door of the hut that a child had been born. From inside the hut the women assisting the mother at the time of delivery had given a single cry if it was a boy and two cries for a girl. If the birth had been delayed till late afternoon towards sunset, the women in the hut said to the mother, if it was a boy: 'See the baby has been awaiting the return of the cattle, because it is he who will tend the cattle.'

The new baby was at first regarded as a stranger, born by a woman who had herself come to the village as a stranger when she married. In later years, when speaking of his parents, the child would say: 'X is my father, and I am of the womb of A, and G and H they are my brother and my sister of one womb.' This particularization of a full brother and sister was used to correct the extended use of the kinship terms, and also to convey the idea that having been born from the womb of one woman gave children a special relationship important in Ngoni thinking.

Preparation for birth

When an Ngoni wife was aware that she was pregnant she did not say anything to her husband, and indeed endeavoured to conceal her condition from him as long as possible, continuing the normal sleeping arrangements and intercourse. Ngoni women liked to assert their authority and ascendancy on those occasions, and therefore excluded the men from knowledge of the coming event and from all preparations for it. The senior women used to say, 'Men are

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

over the age of ten had to avoid the hut and its inhabitants altogether. The husband slept either in the boys' dormitory or with the husband of the woman who was looking after his wife.

This ritual uncleanness extended to any food once it was carried into the hut. Ngoni women used to demonstrate their love for their husbands by stopping cooked food being carried into the hut, and sending it instead by the child who brought it to her husband where the men were gathered at the gate of the kraal.

Ritual cleansing of a hut and its occupants took place in stages. At the time of 'bringing out the child', which I shall shortly describe, the hut itself was made clean again. It was thoroughly swept, and the floor and veranda were smeared with cowdung. Cowdung was used habitually for smearing on floors, prior to polishing them with a smooth stone. But fresh wet cowdung rubbed on the hands was also used for ritual cleansing after some 'dangerous' act such as touching sacred objects or administering the royal medicines. In the case of its use after childbirth it was undoubtedly used in the ritual sense, for the operation was called 'making the hut safe for the husband to sleep in'. The household goods were then put back in their places, anyone could go into the hut, and the husband returned to sleep there, though on a separate mat on his, the right-hand side, of the fireplace. If the child was a first baby, the husband's return to-sleep in the hut was delayed, since the senior women stayed on to instruct the young mother how to take care of the baby at night, and especially how to be careful not to smother it as it lay beside her on her mat.

'*Coming out of the hut*'

The falling of the cord was the signal that the baby was ready to 'come out of the hut' and be presented to the village. Ngoni women used to hasten the falling of the cord by burning a maize cob, and squeezing into the ashes the juice of the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

small bitter thorn apple and mixing in castor oil. This was applied with a feather to the baby's navel.

When the cord dropped the baby's head was shaved, and the mother shaved a little hair round her temples. Then they washed carefully, using sweet-smelling soapy leaves, oiled the baby's skin, put on clean clothes, and came out of the hut door and sat on a clean mat outside. This first public coming out of the hut took place in the late afternoon, so that the men, after their work was finished, could come to 'salute the new stranger'. The husband and his brothers were the first to come, and this was the first time he had seen the baby. They brought small presents such as a fowl or a basket of flour, and always strings of beads which were tied round the baby's wrists and ankles, neck and waist. The word used for these little gifts was 'to give a present just for pleasing', and Ngoni Christians when speaking of such presents to new babies likened them to the gifts brought by the Magi to the infant Christ.

While the husband and his immediate kinsmen came to greet the baby at the hut door, the senior men of the village stayed by the gate of the kraal. After the cattle had come back that evening and the kraal gates were shut, the grandmother carried the baby to the gate and presented him to the senior men who responded by giving small presents to the child. This was always done if the baby was a boy, but sometimes omitted for girls.

When small children seeing the new baby on its mother's lap asked where it came from, they were always told that the mother had found it by the river in the rushes on the bank. The object of this reply, so Ngoni women said, was to hide the secret of birth from the children and stop them asking further questions. The Ngoni culture pattern of childhood innocence required that children should be kept in ignorance of birth and sexual intercourse while they were young. By adults therefore they were put off with stories of finding the baby on the river bank. As usual, however, in

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

primarily within his mother's household, but also, and especially immediately after weaning, in his grandmother's household. His needs for food and warmth could in fact be met in any of the households which formed part of his father's house and family group. There was no greater contrast for the small boy about the age of seven between this kind of life in the women's compound and his plunge into the life of the boys' dormitory.

The father's role with young children

During day-time in Ngoni villages Ngoni men and women lived almost in two separate worlds, the women in their compounds, the men by the kraal gate or about the village. When important visitors arrived the veranda of the 'big house' became a general meeting-place. Chiefs and leading men who had acquired chairs, among other modern household furniture, preferred to entertain their guests on their own veranda where they had some degree of privacy, and to offer them chairs to sit on instead of the kraal fence to lean against. This use of chairs which they found more comfortable to sit on brought many of the fathers of families back to their own verandas now and then during the day, though they continued to eat their meals with the other men at the kraal gate, and to go there to discuss village affairs and watch over the coming and going of the cattle.

This change of habit brought the fathers of families into closer touch with their young children, and it was accelerated by the growing Christian tradition in which fathers were more closely associated with certain aspects of their children's upbringing. It was the father who arranged for the baptism of the children which took place in the local church and was a ceremony attended by most of the village, whether Christians or not. When an evangelist or a school-teacher conducted evening prayers, as they often did near the kraal where anyone could come after the evening meal, Christian fathers sometimes carried a child in their arms to the prayers.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

tion. In all the selection of individuals to 'enter the place' of an important person who had died, the new holder of the place had to measure up to Ngoni personality standards and be acknowledged as a 'good character'.

The new kinds of occupation open to Ngoni men as a result of education in the mission schools were of two main types: those where the holders of the job still lived in the Ngoni kingdom and carried on their work in the setting of a Ngoni village; and those which involved leaving the village and living and working outside Ngoniland, more or less out of sight and out of control of Ngoni elders.

Some of the mission teachers, ministers, and evangelists returned to live in Ngoni villages after they had completed their training, though others of course were posted elsewhere. In one of the villages described in Chapter I there had been in the early days of mission work fierce and continuous opposition to the opening of schools, as well as to the preaching of Christianity. I mentioned the old evangelist who had been threatened with death by the chief when he first took up his work. If he had left under those threats he would have lost out for ever among his people, for he would have been called a coward. He stayed, cultivated his land, grew his own food, was a great hunter, was respectful to the chief and elders, brought up his children to respect Ngoni traditions. He gradually gained the reputation of being brave, a 'gentle' man, a powerful and fluent speaker in the church on Sundays, a man of wisdom and judgement, and he was constantly asked for his opinion on village affairs. Most of the village, Christian and non-Christian alike, went to the church service on Sundays, sang the Ngoni hymns, listened to his sermons in the Ngoni language, sprinkled with Ngoni proverbs and illustrated by episodes from Ngoni life and history. Very few people in that village over twenty-five years old were Christians, but the leading Ngoni families allowed him to baptize younger and older children and to instruct them in Sunday-school. The Ngoni elders contributed to the

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

new wife to replace the divorced woman. Divorce however seems to have been rare, and in the genealogies I collected I met with only one instance of divorce at this period.

3. *Payments and ceremonies*

Betrothal[10] was a preliminary to marriage but was not compulsory. A girl was betrothed only if she was sought in marriage before puberty and the marriage then did not take place until some years after puberty. If a girl passed puberty without being betrothed she was subsequently married without a betrothal period. A man was expected to make presents to the girl he had betrothed and he began to adopt avoidance relationships towards her parents. If after puberty the girl or her parents wished to break off the engagement they could do so but were then under an obligation to return the man's presents. The ceremony at which an aristocratic girl after puberty chose her own husband has been described by Wiese.[11]

In the marriage itself there are two main stages marked by two distinct transfers of cattle. The first transfer was called 'snuff-box', *mfuko*. The name of the payment is based on the practice of begging snuff from one's friends and acquaintances and indicates something trifling and not recoverable. It consisted of one beast. Payment of 'snuff-box' established the man's rights to bring an action against an adulterer but it did not give him the right to take his wife away to his own village nor to the custody of any children she might bear him. These rights were obtained only by the payment of bride-wealth, *malowolo*,[12] which consisted of from one to a dozen beasts depending on the status of the woman's father. Both payments, 'snuff-box' and bridewealth, were made by the man or, if he was a young man, by his father to his wife's father. No specifically defined relatives were obliged to help a man find his marriage cattle but a man with few cattle of his own looked for assistance to the head of his cluster. Similarly there were no definite rules of distribution of the marriage cattle among the woman's relatives and the matter

[10] The verb is *ku-homeka* for a man, and the passive *ku-homekewa* for a woman. Cf. Bemba *uku-kobeka* and *uku-kobekwa* in Richards, *Bemba Marriage and Present Economic Conditions* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. Four), p. 61.

[11] In his later paper he calls the ceremony *inyamuale*. In the earlier paper he calls the ceremony held at first menstruation *inhamuale* and says that after this ceremony the girl went with others to choose the man she liked. The vernacular words he mentions are presumably connected with the modern Nyanja *cinamwali*, which is now sometimes applied to three ceremonies held (1) at first menstruation, (2) six months later, *cinamwali cacimaya*, and (3) after first pregnancy, *cinamwali cacikulu*. The abstract noun *unamwali* is sometimes used in place of the concrete *cinamwali*. Cf. Wiese, op. cit., 'Expediçao . . .', p. 473, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191; Rattray, op. cit. pp. 102 and 190; Stigand, 'Notes on the natives of Nyasaland, N.E. Rhodesia, and Portuguese Zambezia, their arts, customs and modes of subsistence', *JRAI*, xxxvii (1907), p. 121; Read, 'Tradition and prestige among the Ngoni', *Africa*, ix (1936), p. 472; Young and Banda, *Our African Way of Life*, pp. 22-4.

[12] Cf. the Zulu verb *uku-lobola*; also Rattray, op. cit. p. 199.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

was left to the discretion of her father. 'Snuff-box' was handed over before the man began to sleep with his bride while bridewealth could be paid either then or later after the woman had borne children. Once bridewealth had been paid the rights of the man's group were definitely established and, in the event of the man's death, one of his younger brothers became the widow's pro-husband in leviratic marriage.

The significance of bridewealth is clearly indicated by the procedure followed in marriages in which it was not paid. If a man paid 'snuff-box' and then died before he paid bridewealth, the children of the marriage belonged to his wife's kinsmen and not to his kinsmen. His brothers could secure the woman as the wife of one of them, and the children as legitimate members of their segment, by payment of bridewealth. It is said that a woman could refuse to go to a brother of her dead husband under these conditions but that she could not refuse to give up the children to the husband's kinsman who paid bridewealth. If although bridewealth had been paid she went off and married another unrelated man the children she bore to her new husband belonged to her dead husband's kin.

Some informants say that if a man died without having paid bridewealth his sons were under an obligation to pay cattle to their mother's kin on behalf of their dead father, but I did not hear of any instance in which this had been done. Similarly it is said that if a man had paid bridewealth but had never been given a linked co-wife, his son could claim a wife from the kin of the woman for whom bridewealth had been handed over. Other informants deny this possibility, and say that it was the man's son's son who could have made this claim. I did not hear of any instances of either practice in the past and when recently a chief tried to claim a wife on the strength of bridewealth offered by his father, he failed.

Important men sometimes married female captives and no bridewealth passed. These wives were usually not of high status and their sons founded lines junior to those of sons by other wives for whom bridewealth had been paid.

The general impression gained from the tales of old informants and from the contemporary literature is that 'snuff-box' and bridewealth were paid in most marriages. The evidence, such as it is, from a survey of the marriages experienced since birth by men and women alive in 1946-9 suggests that this was not so. The way in which this survey was conducted is described below.[13] The information on pre-1898 marriages is set out in Tables I and II.

It will be seen that in half (7 out of 14) of these marriages, no payments at all were offered. In the marriage in which 'snuff-box' was offered it consisted not of a beast but of a quantity of tobacco. In about a third of the marriages the only payment made was the 'legalization payment', which traditionally was not part of the pre-1898

[13] See pp. 22f.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

her pro-husband. If there was no younger brother the pro-husband was one of her husband's junior patrilineal kinsmen of his own generation. She could not refuse a pro-husband although her husband's brothers could choose not to provide her with a pro-husband if they so wished. The widow continued to live in her own cluster where her pro-husband came to visit her. Rattray states that widows waited one year after their husband's death before their re-marriage was settled[23] and this is nowadays the traditional procedure. Wiese, however, writes that widows waited four years before they could marry again.[24] The children begotten by the pro-husband were regarded as children of the dead man for social purposes but the identity of their genitor was not disguised. They called him *father*, but this was as much because he was their dead pater's brother and their mother's pro-husband as because he was their genitor.

The same principle of substitution was applied to betrothal. If a man died before marrying a girl to whom he was betrothed, the betrothal passed to a younger brother or a classificatory brother. If a girl died before marrying the man to whom she was betrothed, the betrothal passed to a younger sister. Unlike the operation of the levirate, however, the children of this type of marriage were regarded as the children of their genitor and genetrix for all purposes, as though their parents had been betrothed to each other in the first place. Again, unlike the levirate, if a man considered himself too old when his betrothed became marriageable he might give her instead to his son as a wife. The children of this marriage were also regarded for all purposes as the children of their genitor and genetrix.

Occasionally a woman whose husband died young, went to live with a man who was not her dead husband's brother, real or classificatory. The pro-husband gave a goat to the woman, but if bride-wealth had been offered for her by her first husband, the pro-husband could never gain permanent custody of the children. The children that she bore by him belonged to the segment of the dead man, took his descent name, and when old enough went to live in his segment. When the dead man's kinsmen claimed these children, they gave a beast to their genitor 'to straighten his back', that is, for his labour in begetting them. This arrangement is in some ways analagous to Nuer widow-concubinage[25] but with the important difference that the pro-husband, although not a kinsman of the dead man, had rights in the widow as a wife and an exclusive right to her sexual services. It seems that the status of a widow living in this kind of union was not low. In one instance I heard of, very aristocratic families were involved, and the arrangement appears to have been

[23] Rattray, op. cit., p. 97.
[24] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedição . . .', p. 474, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 192.
[25] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and Family Among the Nuer* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. Eleven), p. 18.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

made with the approval of the dead man's kin. Although by this arrangement the woman was for a while removed from her allotted place in the system, the *status quo ante* was restored with the return of the children to their pater's kinsmen.

8. Segmentation

The primary cleavage among a man's children was between the children of one band and the children of another. Within a band, the division was into separate 'houses'. Where there were children of more than one mother in the same 'house', that is where the senior wife as well as the linked wife had borne children or where there was more than one fertile linked co-wife with the same senior, the division was between the groups of full siblings. These lines of cleavage were expressed spatially by the arrangements of the huts belonging to each segment. At the top of the political hierarchy, the arrangement of the Paramount Chief's queens determined the major divisions into which the nation was split residentially, with a senior queen in charge of each major royal village, and lesser queens in charge of politically dependent royal villages. At the bottom, the man with two or three wives saw his sons group themselves round their mothers while retaining a common allegience to him.

Thus we see that in 'the time of peace' marriage was tied to a clear-cut residential system based on patrilineal descent and virilocal residence, modified by political status deriving ultimately from the Paramount Chief. The position of males in this system was determinate, although not unalterable. By the processes of marriage males were supplied with legitimate offspring. Although descent and succession were traced through males, the pattern of segmentation of this patrilineal system was determined by the organization of wives. The relative status of co-wives was perpetuated in the relationship between the segments which sprang from them.

In this system the elementary family of man, wife, and children did not emerge as an important grouping. In all serious enterprises a person derived support from his male agnates, and it was to the organized kin that the fertility of the woman was transferred by the payment of bridewealth. By the time a man had advanced in status sufficiently to be head of a division or a village, he had acquired many dependants who were not true kinsmen and his wives had been divided into bands. With the recently captured families, these considerations did not apply with quite the same force, for there were many poor men who had only one wife. These people depended on their political superior for cattle, and the women were to some extent under the control of his great wife, in so far as agricultural work and beer brewing were concerned. Even the rearing of children once they had been weaned was carried on outside the elementary family. Children were sent to their grandmother's house to be trained and indoctrinated with Ngoni values. The recent captives

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

one instance where the woman ran off with the man called in by her sterile husband. 842 839

4. The legal relationship

Emphasis on sexual partnership is characteristic of the beginning of marriage. Young people are 'foolish', dance all night long and sleep late in the morning. With the arrival of children, man and wife emerge from the tutelage of their elders and non-sexual aspects of their marriage relationship gain in importance. Even then the importance of sexual satisfaction is not forgotten. People say openly of a woman who obstructs her husband when he seeks a second wife, 'She is too fond of his penis', and old widows explain their failure to remarry by saying 'Our joints are too stiff to copulate'. 593 [851]

Nevertheless at all times there is a great deal more in Ngoni marriage than mere sexual partnership. The obligations and duties of husband and wife towards each other and each other's kin are determined by the marriage payments and ratified by the ceremonies of marriage. These obligations persist despite the fluctuations of sexual attraction. We have seen that in 'the time of peace' the two principal transfers were 'snuff-box' and bridewealth. Today the position is different and the rights transferred by the marriage payments are different. For simplicity we may discuss the latter payment first. Bridewealth is still recognized but, as can be seen from Table V, is paid in only about four per cent of all marriages. It consists of a payment of one or more beasts or £6 made by the man to his wife's father.[16] If only one cow is offered and it dies before calving, it must be replaced. Some indication of the range of variation in amounts paid is given by Table VI. 583 178

This sample of only twelve payments is very small, but there is some indication that the amount paid has decreased in recent years. This is of interest in view of the general rise in the standard of wealth and in the amount offered as legalization payment.

By the payment of bridewealth a man ensures that all the children of his wife, by whatever genitor, shall, or rather ought to, belong to his group of relatives and live in his village when they grow up. The payment is made only after several children have been born. In the old days, if this payment was made, the children were legitimate and lived in their father's segment, and if it was not paid they could be claimed by their mother's father's segment. In these days there is no such hard and fast rule. Everyone has in effect a large choice of places where he can live, and the payment or non-payment of bridewealth for his mother is only one factor operating with many others in influencing his decisions. It is not surprising that so few people pay bridewealth. [851]

[16] For comparative figures for the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Native standards of living and African cultural change', *Africa* xi (1938), 3, supplement, p. 33.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

becomes her husband's *sibling* so that their marriage is then incestuous. I have recorded elsewhere[33] an instance in which a man married his son's wife's mother. His son's wife left her husband, saying that she could not sleep with her *sibling*. In court the old man was ordered to give up his new wife and on that understanding his son's wife returned to her husband. Yet when I left the area two years later the man and his son were both living with their wives, despite the order of the court.

It is quarrelling, adultery and divorce that bring together the two groups of kin to deliberate. Quarrelling is usually between man and wife and arises from their personal life together. There are very few quarrels between the two groups of kin over the custody of the children or about the handing over or return of marriage payments. The custody of children is determined in theory by the payment of bridewealth. In practice a child stays with its mother until it is weaned and may then be sent to a grandparent. Here there is no argument, even in theory, that all the children should go to one grandparent or the other depending on bridewealth. Some people say that the proper thing to do is to send the first child to the man's mother, the second to his wife's mother, the third to the man's mother, the fourth to his wife's mother, and so on. This is not carried out in practice, and a child goes to live with whichever grandparent asks for it or is conveniently situated. Some old widows run households containing up to half a dozen grandchildren, real and classificatory, and others live alone or with one grandchild although there are many grandchildren available. A married man is concerned that he should not appear to favour his own relatives at the expense of his affines, and he endeavours to see that his children go to live where they will be welcomed and well looked after. As with children, so it is with presents. If he returns from work and gives his father a shirt, it will be prudent the next time to give a shirt to his wife's father. It is only when the marriage has broken up that the two sets of relatives may see themselves opposed against each other, each insistent on its own rights. Even then, there is little point in quarrelling about children. A child soon becomes 'wise enough' and can choose for itself. I recorded an exceptional instance in which a man aged about twenty moved from the village of his father's father, where he had been living, to his mother's father's village on the instructions of his kinsmen, who said that as his father had not paid bridewealth for his mother, he must follow his mother's kin and not his father's. This kind of move does not often occur, and although only one marriage in twenty is accompanied by the payment of bridewealth, many people settle in their fathers' villages.

8. Other Kinsfolk

We have so far discussed the role of kin in a marriage in terms of

[33] See Barnes, op. cit. p. 232

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

he has not been brought up by them but by some other relative. In particular a man is reluctant to discuss his affairs directly with his father if he can get his eldest brother to act as his intermediary. The eldest brother is heir to their father and it is considered that he should act as the channel by which the father is approached. He deals with proposals of marriage arising from his younger siblings and if he approves of them, he refers the matter to their father. This pattern of relations seems most marked in aristocratic families.

9. Widows

While it is a man's eldest brother who helps to arrange his marriage, it is his younger brothers who become pro-husbands to his widows. We have seen that in the old days a widow was usually looked after by a younger brother of the dead man but she continued to live in her dead husband's segment, and the children she bore by her pro-husband were grouped with the children of the dead man. This can still happen but it is no longer the invariable rule. As in the old days, if bridewealth has been paid by the first husband and after his death his widow goes to live with someone else, the second husband or pro-husband cannot offer bridewealth and the children he begets belong to the dead husband and take his descent name.

Some indication of the extent to which widows remain with their dead husbands' kin is given by data collected in two villages. All the women now living in these villages had between them experienced widowhood 31 times. In two instances (6 per cent) the widow had been cared for by her dead husband's brother; and in 11 instances (35 per cent) the widow took a new husband not directly related to the dead man. In the remaining 18 instances (58 per cent) the widow had not married again and was living alone.

A man may die at any stage of his marriage. If he is betrothed to a girl and then dies, the betrothal passes to a younger brother. When the girl is old enough, the younger brother marries her as though she had been betrothed to him in the first place and the children he has by her are his own children. Similarly, if a betrothed girl dies before she is married, the betrothal passes to a younger sister.

If a man dies after he has been properly married his widows have definite roles to play. For a month after his death, they must wear the signs of mourning, and they are in danger of *mdulo*[84] if they commit adultery during that time. They must be ready to wail when distant visitors arrive to mourn. At the end of a month they brew beer, and there is a joyous party. A year after the death there is another party, and the fate of the widows is discussed. If none of the younger brothers or kinsmen of the dead man wish to look after the widows, they are free to go their own way, and there may be a formal statement of divorce. They are in any case now spoken

[84] See above, p. 46.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

589 of as being divorced from the dead man. If they do not themselves wish to be inherited they cannot be forced to remain.

589 If a widow is cared for by a younger brother of her dead husband, and that man already has a wife of his own, the widow is regarded as inferior in status to the man's own wife. Yet any children she
● 851 has by him count as if they were children by the dead husband, and
428 as such they inherit his cattle and offices before the brother's children
554 by his own wife. This apparent paradox is due to the nature of Ngoni seniority. Seniority was always associated with position in a definite segment in the old residential system. The widow belongs to the segment of her dead husband, and even today if she is a queen she ought to stay there after she has been given a pro-husband. If she moves to live in proximity to her pro-husband, she comes into the ranking system of which the pro-huband's great wife is the superior. Her children are, however, still associated with the segment from whence she came.

587 The new husband, whether he is a kinsman of the dead man or not, pays one goat, also known as 'snuff-box', on taking the woman,
583 and this animal she keeps herself, and does not hand on to her father
851 or brother. If no bridewealth was paid by the first husband, the children borne to the second take the descent name of their own father and his rights in the marriage are the same as if he were marrying the woman for the first time and had made the legalization payment.

589 There is then an opportunity for the marriage to continue after the death of the man if his wife and his kinsmen are both agreeable. If the widow wishes to go her own way, she can do so, and if his kinsmen do not wish to care for her, they need not. Even if they do not like the woman they cannot turn her out of the village, and she can go on living in her dead husband's hut and cultivating the same garden as before. She may even re-marry and bring in her new husband to live with her in her dead spouse's village. The extent to which this can be done without quarrelling depends very much on the personalities of the people involved. If the widow decides to go back to her own village, her husband's kin may try to prevent her removing possessions of which the ownership is not certain, and she should discuss with them how much of the crops she can take away from her garden.

587 Nowadays the death of a wife brings the marriage to an end. We have seen that in the old days the dead woman was replaced by a linked co-wife, and that this institution has now all but disappeared. There is no other form of sororate, and although a man may sometimes in jest address his wife's sister as *wife*, he has no rights over her.

593 The specific responsibilities of brothers towards a man's marriage are demonstrated in the role of the elder brother as a marriage negotiator and of the younger brother as potential husbands for a man's widows. A man would not, save in exceptional circumstances,

II:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

migration about 1833; her burial place is unknown. She died without issue. She was the eldest daughter of Nombhengula, who was a brother of Ziwide and Sigode, and a son of Langa Vimba Nqumayo. She was a cousin to Manukusa, son of Sigode, and to Nompetu, daughter of Ziwide, who married Matshobana, the father of Mzilikazi. Sometimes it happens that a great wife or other major wife is not blessed with children. In these cases another woman is placed in her "house" with the object of raising seed to it. The children resulting are looked upon as children of the establishment in which their mother was "placed" and are in the same position as if born to the major wife; the eldest son of a chief's "Great Wife" inherits the chieftainship of the tribe on the death of his father. This was, and is, the custom of the Ngoni; it is also known to the Achewa and Ansonga Tribes. This custom is known to the Ngoni as *Nahlanze*.

Zongendaba therefore took as *Nahlanze* Sosera Nqumayo, a younger sister of Loziwawa, and by her he had issue as follows:—Ntutu Mpezeni, the eldest son, "the Inkosana of the Indhlunkulu," Jadose, Mtwalalichi, and Ndhlobvu Makekevu. Sosera was born about 1808 near St. Lucia Bay. She migrated with the chief and followed him through all his wanderings until his death, after which she accompanied her son and heir, Ntutu Mpezeni, into what is now the Fort Jameson district. There she settled in her village called "Dingeni," where she died in 1900 and was buried near the site of the old village of Mtenguleni Uka Sosera close to the Kakolo stream; her grave is now marked by an euphorbia tree. The site is on the farm owned by Major Jefferies, O.B.E., which prior to the invasion of the Ngoni used to be the land of the Achewa chief, Kampara.

Sosera is well remembered by many natives who are living to-day, and although she died at a great age it is said that she was in possession of her full faculties until the last. She is described as being a real chieftainess and it is said that in later years if annoyed by the younger generation she would lay about her with her *mchiza* (staff) in a lusty manner. Many amusing tales are told of her astuteness and dry humour.

After Zongendaba's death, Sosera chose for a very beautiful woman, named Nthonano, who was a young sister-wife to the house and who had borne no children, one, Sawasa Mazumko, as a seed raiser, for which he received twenty head of cattle. A daughter was born and named Ndawiri Jere; she now resides in the Fort Manning District of Nyasaland and from her this information was obtained. Ndawiri looked upon Ntutu Mpezeni as her brother, and Ndawiri was, and is, looked upon as one of Zongendaba's children. She married Ndawombi, since dead, and has one son, Ndawombi Hara.

It is agreed by the old indunas that Ntutu Mpezeni would have been about nine years of age when he crossed over the Zambesi, that he was carried across as befitted a Paramount Chief's heir, that, prior to the crossing, Zongendaba had given him a little shield and an assegai, and that he had killed his first duiker buck before the crossing. This is also borne out by the sons of Zimakazi Lavu Ngoma and Ngandu Mbawa, both of whose fathers were set the task of being servants to the chief's heir in his youth.